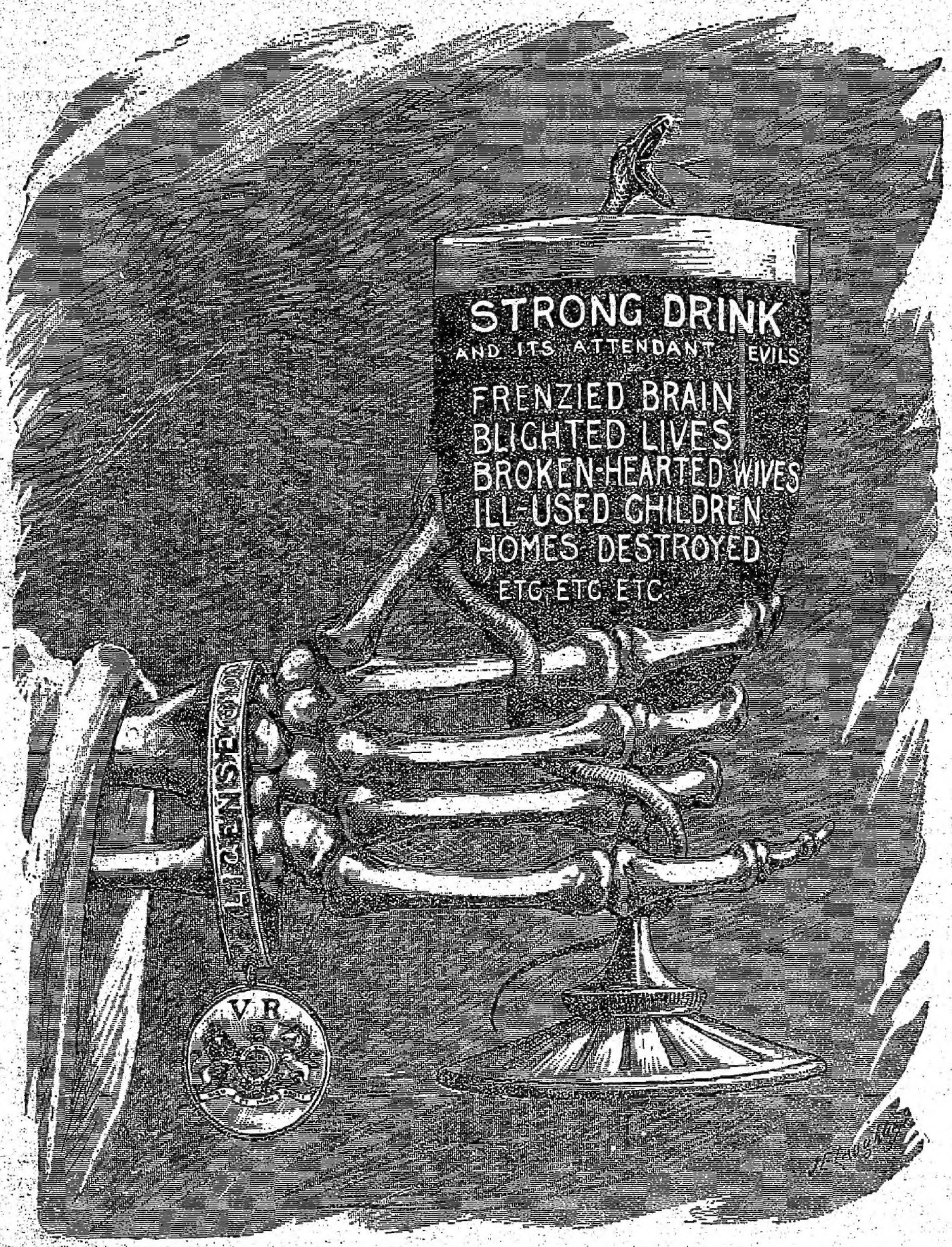
Lillie Pozer 1898-99

Northern Messenger

VOLUME XXXIII., No. 18. MONTREAL AND NEW YORK MAY 6, 1898. 30 Cts. Per An. Post-Paid



THE DEATH-HAND OF THE GOVERNMENT.

To secure to our citizens 'Life, Liberty and a chance to be happy,' our government exists, but through a legalized drink traffic thousands of citizens are deprived of one, and sometimes all of those 'inalienable rights.'—'War Cry.'

Bread-Winning.

(By the Rev. F. B. Meyer, in 'Golden Rule.')

Almost the first question in every-one's life is to settle the question that Satan put to our Lord in his first temptation. Where does bread and bread-getting come in? Is it to be the first consideration or last? According to Satan's way of looking at life, the bread question is paramount; according to Christ, secondary. Have you ever sat down and considered which policy is yours, and what you would do if you had to choose in any supreme crisis?

It is very remarkable that this was the first temptation, because it so constantly occurs in every life; and sooner or later, whether on a lone mountain side or in the crowded thoroughfares of life, the devil comes to us with the suggestion that we must live, and in the last push we must make or get our bread, leaving considerations of truth, honor, God, and eternity to come in second best.

The man that keeps his shop open on Sunday, because on that day he makes more than on all the rest of the week, says in effect, 'Bread is my first consideration; my family and I must live.' The young man that accepts a partnership in some lucrative business, against which his conscience raises urgent protests, says, 'Bread is first.' The girl that accepts a wealthy suitor with whom she can have no real sympathy, also says, 'Bread is first.' Some day you will have to choose between your situation and your conscience, between making a large income and following principle, between mammon and God. It may be God's will to give you success in life, but it is equally certain that he will require you to choose, altogether apart from other considerations, whether at all hazards you will manufacture bread, or whether you will live on every word that proceedeth out of his mouth.

Our Lord chose the latter. Had he willed, he could have supplied his hunger by the exercise of his power; but to have done so would have made it impossible for him to become the bread of life, or to multiply the five barley loaves to feed thousands.

The martyrs elected to follow the high ideals of Christ, though they rotted in noisome dungeons, and starved. The reformers chose to prosecute their conceptions of a Christian State and Church, though they had to sacrifice everything that earth counts precious. The holiest souls are those who have been so taken up with the words that proceed from the mouth of God that they have been largely indifferent to the claims of their physical life.

At every turning-point in the story of the inner life, these two methods are suggested. Christ says, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by the words of God.'

Do you want strength to stand against the wiles of the tempter? There is nothing for it but to live on the words of God. For forty days our Lord had been meditating upon them, and so when the tempter came, though the hunger of his body was making itself felt, his spirit was nourished and equipped. Go thou and do likewise. Feed on the living bread which has come down from heaven. Fill yourself with God's purposes and ideals. Let the thoughts of God be the very bread of the inner man, and when the hour of temptation comes, it will not take you a moment to choose between snatching a morsel to satisfy the cravings of passion and waiting on God.

We are all liable to attacks of hunger in various parts of our nature, and Satan is perpetually insisting on our getting satisfaction somehow.

Feed your lower nature as your first concern, and you will starve your real and better self. This is what the men of the world are doing, whose belly is their god, who glory in their shame, and who mind earthly things. Feed your highest nature at any cost to the lower, and ultimately the whole will become satisfied. Seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto thee. 'Trust in the Lord and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the land; and verily thou shalt be fed.'

Queen Victoria as a 'Goddess'

Miss Annie Taylor's adopted mission field of Thibet, on the western side of China, is a land of old superstitions, which have not yet been swept away by the 'glorious light of the Gospel of Christ.' It is said that only one Englishman has ever been able to stay in Thibet for any length of time. That Englishman is Mr. Majoribanks, a young traveller, who has lived for five years in the region. He confesses that even during that long time he has learnt little of the history and customs of the people. He has had many strange experiences, many hair-breadth escapes. One of the most curious things that befell him was a journey that he

MR. MAJORIBANKS FOUND THE THIBETANS WORSHIPPING A STATUE OF QUEEN VICTORIA.

made into a stronghold city far up in the mountains.

Rumors had come to him that in a rugged district in the hill country there lived a strange sect which worshipped a strange white goddess—a goddess that was all-powerful for good or for evil.

Mr. Majoribanks determined to find out the facts of the case for himself. He was told that even should he reach the Thibetan stronghold, he would never leave it alive. One morning, however, with a native guide and two servants, he started out on his hazardous enterprise.

He found, contrary to his expectations, that his white face was regarded with awe and respect. The farther he journeyed into the hills, the more honor he received. At length he came to the spot so often heard of, so seldom seen, where the strangest temples of heathen religion in the world are to be found. The natives of Thibet, on seeing his white face, bowed down to their visitor almost in worship. Mr. Majoribanks soon learned that he was in the district of the Great White Goddess he had come so far to seek. He was conducted to the Khan, the principal official in the city, who received him with low salaams and the utmost respect.

On the morning following his arrival, accompanied by the Khan and two priests, Mr. Majoribanks was conducted to the temple. In awe and wonder he entered the dim-lit building. In front of a wall at one end he saw a white idol, a golden crown on the head, jewels on the long robe with which it was clothed. The white goddess of the Thibetan heathens was nothing less than a statue of Queen Victoria. She is worshipped by them morning and night, and prayers and praise are offered up to her image.

Two years later the same traveller was exploring the more remote parts of the Indian Province of Bengal, where, in the same way, strange stories were poured into his ear of the White Queen being worshipped as an idol. After many days of investigation he was finally led to a temple built in the hollow of a rock in one of the most rugged hills in Bengal. There he found her too loyal Indian subjects, not content with serving Her Majesty as a queen, were worshipping her image as a goddess.

The idol representing Queen Victoria was carved out of soft clay, after a photograph that had been brought from Calcutta. The idol looked for all the world like a statue of the Queen modelled in wax at Madame Tussaud's. It was richly adorned with precious stones, while a golden crown rested upon the head. Of all the Bengal deities, the Great White Queen was worshipped as the most powerful.

When those people have learned the gospel of Jesus Christ, they will know that God alone is to receive the worship of men. — 'Christian Herald.'

Christ Present.

'One Saturday night,' once said the late Dr. A. J. Gordon, in a public address, 'I dreamed that I was in my pulpit, on a Sunday morning, just about to announce my text, when a stranger entered the church. He was a plain man of thoughtful countenance. He walked up one of the aisles, passing pews that were filled, until I became anxious lest he should not find a seat; but presently one of the members received him into his pew. I announced my text and proceeded with the discourse. Somehow the stranger drew my gaze irresistibly throughout the sermon, so unearthly was the expression on his face; and I said to myself, "I must find out who he is; I must speak to him." So soon as the benediction was pronounced I stepped down from the pulpit intending to make my way to the stranger; but I was intercepted, and when I got to the pew he was gone. I eagerly enquired of the brother who had seated him, "Can you tell me who the stranger was?" "Why, don't you know?' was the reply; "it was Jesus Christ." 'Then,' said Dr. Gordon, 'I was seized with an anxious desire to recall all that I had said that morning, feeling a painful apprehension lest I had said something that wounded the blessed Saviour. I cannot tell how grateful I was when assured that I had said nothing that I would not have been willing to say had I known that Jesus was present. Such was my dream,' said the doctor. 'The memory of it has never left me. And always now am I conscious that Jesus is one of my hearers.'— 'Morning Star.'

Enriched by Losses.

The soil of the vineyards on the slopes of Vesuvius is disintegrated lava. The richest grapes from which a precious wine is made grow on the product of eruptions which tore the mountain side and darkened all the sky. So our costliest graces of character are grown in a heart enriched by losses and made fertile by convulsions which rent it, and covered smiling verdure with what seemed at first a fiery flood of ruin.—Dr. Maclaren.

BOYS AND GIRLS

What Shall I Buy?

'What are you going to do now, Edith?' asked Ned Wright, looking up lazily from his arm chair by the fire; 'why, you were out the whole morning!'

'Except when I was making pies, and custards and turnovers, and jellies for your delectation to-morrow,' said Edith, brandishing her purse in his face, 'that's what I'm going for, sir. I do think buying Christmas presents is the jolliest time in the year.'

'Not so good as receiving them,' said Ned roguishly; 'at least I don't think so. I say, Ede, what should you like to receive best of anything to-morrow?'

'A penny pencil,' she called back gaily as she opened the front door, and she laughed as she ran down the path to think that she had seen through Master Ned's little ruse.

'All right, my dear,' said Ned, to himself, 'you shall have it, and something else, for all you are so sharp.'

Meanwhile, Edith had reached the tramline, taken her seat, and was being carried into the neighboring town of Croyland.

Now was the time to make a list of the presents she wanted, and soon she was scribbling away with a pencil stump on the back of an envelope.

Father, Mother, Nellie, Minnie, Ned and baby, Arthur, the servants and Ralph Warren. Yes, that was all, and she peered in her purse, and counted the contents, so much for this, so much for that, all very satisfactory.

As they began to enter the town, she watched the shops, already lighted up grandly, and the streams of eager people.

'Christmas is a very happy time,' soliloquized Edith. Then her eyes fell on a queer figure. . . . . A little bundled-up girl, with a big broom cuddled in her arms stood on the pavement trying to blow some warmth into her small blue hands. She was small and so unlike the rest of the bustling crowd that she attracted the attention of all the car full of people.

'How inhuman some mothers are,' remarked one lady.

'Poor little mite!' said another, 'she's nearly frozen.'

'You may be sure what she earns will go into drink,' said another. 'Cruel, is it not?'

THE CHILD WAS AGAIN TRYING TO WARM HER HANDS.

Somehow Edith felt as if she must stand up for that absent mother.

'The child looks clean and well cared for,' she said with flashing eyes. 'Perhaps the poor mother is sick, and the father looking for work. They don't all drink.'

There was a moment's silence, then somebody laughed, and the tram stopped, and Edith alighted with burning cheeks.

The car had carried them out of sight of the little cold child sweeper, but Edith felt impelled to go back. 'I'll just give her a penny,' she thought.

The child was again trying to warm her hands when Edith reached her side. On a nearer acquaintance she did not look unhappy, and her blue eyes had a bright gleam of determination in them.

'What's your name, little girl? Aren't you very cold?' asked Edith as a preliminary.

The little girl smiled up at her. 'Not so very considering,' she answered, with an odd grown-up air, adding confidingly, 'I'm Rhoda!'

'Why are you sweeping the snow?' inquired Edith. 'You are such a small girl, you know. Is there not somebody else at home?'

'I'm going to earn,' said Rhoda, sturdily. 'I've got three pennies. There's mother, she's got a baby, such a little one, and mother cried because Dick (he's my brother) broke his leg sliding on Saturday, and she said there wouldn't be anything for Christmas. Perhaps I'll get sixpence, and won't she be surprised!'

'Well, here's a penny,' said Edith, smiling, 'Where's your father? Does he not work?'

Rhoda looked at her a little reproachfully.

'He's got influenza, and the doctor said he would die if he went out in the cold.' Her voice faltered for the first time, and Edith patted her shoulder reassuringly. Then she slipped threepence into her little hand and turned away. A moment later she returned, 'Where do you live?' she asked,

'Six, Leslie Row,' said Rhoda, who was again wielding her broom with energy. 'Thank you ever so for that threepence.'

Edith went somewhat slowly back to the shops. Her plans had undergone a change; there was another name to add to her list, but her money had not increased. If little brave Rhoda's father and mother were to share her Christmas gifts, somebody else must go short. Could she leave any one else out? Ralph? she had always given him some little remembrance since they were children together. The servants? Certainly not. No! She would spend a little less on everybody's presents, and thus save something.

So she entered upon her shopping at last; but at the outset she met with an unforeseen difficulty.

The tea-cosy for her mother was a sweet thing at the price she had originally intended; but a cheaper one was hideous.

It was the same with her father's spectacle case, and Ned's knife, and Ralph's cuff-links.

If she was to save something for the little sweeper's family, it must be by the tremendous self-denial of giving a cheaper present than she generally did.

She left the shop and stood outside another considering. Could she? Should she? Yes, she could and would. Mother would be pleased with any little gift; and what did it matter if the others thought her mean?'.

So Edith gained the victory over herself, found a pretty and cheaper cosy, bought a less elaborate spectacle-case, a less pretentious set of links, and a knife with three blades, instead of four, and so on; and at last set out to find Leslie Row with a happy heart and several shillings still in her purse.

Somehow Rhoda's home was just what she had pictured it. So clean, so bare, so chilly, with its handful of fire and its frail father, and wan mother and tiny baby. But cheery, sturdy little Rhoda was there too. Once more Edith went on a Christmas shopping with Rhoda's little hand in hers, but this time it was to the grocer's and the coal dealer's and the baker's and the butcher's; and when her purse was empty there were glad faces and whispered thanks to God in little Rhoda's home.

'We are going to have a Christmas,' were the words Edith heard Rhoda say as she

shut the door at last, and ran away to her tram.

And when Christmas morning came Edith gave round her presents with a full heart, glad, glad, that though they were a little cheaper than the others gave, somebody else in the big city was waking up to a happy Christmas too.

'It's a splendid knife,' whispered Ned as he slipped a silver thimble and a penny pencil into her pocket, 'You always spend too much on me.'—'Our Darlings.'

Christlike Christmas Presents

(H. R. Estey in 'The Independent.')

'Well, that settles the question of Christmas presents for this year!' said Edith Marvin, in a tone which she tried to make quite cheerful—an attempt in which she failed miserably. For what girl of sixteen, even though she have sweet Madonna eyes and forehead, as did this daughter of a country minister, can contemplate a Christmas without presents and the usual festivities with stoic composure?

The mother, reclining in an invalid's chair near the old-fashioned fireplace, perceived the heroic effort and the signal failure; for the atmosphere of this plain, Christian home was one of love, and such an atmosphere is an excellent medium for the transmission of heart vibrations.

It was an evening in December, and a blizzard, such as Kansas knows, was making the wind fairly screech and howl about the light frame house. With every strong blast the whole building was visibly shaken; but the mother and daughter seemed not to notice this. Kansas winds and cheaply built houses make this such an ordinary occurrence that it ceases to be a matter of nervous discomfort to denizens of the prairie. The hard, dry snow had been whipped in by the wind between the window-sashes and under the door, where it lay white and chilly, untouched by the heat from the blazing fire in the old brick fireplace. Now and again the rag carpet was raised with a swelling, wave-like motion as the wind swept under it.

The evening devotions had been concluded, and the minister had gone out to the barn to see that the stock was all right for the night; for in this Western village almost every family kept a horse, a cow, a few pigs and a flock of chickens. It was this opportunity which Mrs. Marvin had improved to break to Edith the news about the distressing condition of the family finances; for she knew how difficult it would be for the tender-hearted father to do so. She wished to spare him the keen pain of seeing the shadow of disappointment settle on their child's face. She strengthened herself to endure this, by thinking of the look of relief which would come over the father's face when she should tell him that the explanations were all over, and that Edith seemed quite reconciled and cheerful in her acceptance of the unpleasant condition of things; for she felt sure she would be able to say this truthfully, since Edith was such a brave patient child.

A home missionary's life on the Kansas prairie knows some things not dreamed of in the philosophy of many an Eastern pastor. Mr. Marvin had three charges, from each of which he received a hundred and twenty-five dollars annually, by way of remuneration for his ministerial services; in addition to this, he received two hundred dollars from the Home Mission Board. One who knows even a little about the cost of books, periodicals, clothing, groceries and rent, can easily perceive that the amount annually saved from this income could not be very large, even with the careful economy which a missionary's family knows how to exercise. Thus, it is easily conceivable that when the married son, John, who was a telegraph operator, was thrown out of employment and brought his wife and child 'home' to stay until he found a new position, and Mrs. Marvin's mother was stricken with paralysis and lay helpless as a child for a year before she went to be with God—it is easily conceivable, I say, that under these circumstances, the little store of savings melted away. After the funeral expenses were paid and money provided to send John's wife and child to him, it became plain that there would be very little money to spend for Christmas festivities. But it was the information imparted to Mr. Marvin that day by one of the deacons that came as the crowning trial and called forth from Edith the exclamation which she tried to make a cheerful one, and only succeeded in making a pitiably miserable one. The deacon had said that it would be impossible to pay him the salary due from this charge for several months. That meant that the Marvins would have all they could do to pay for food and necessary clothing. There could not possibly be a single penny spared for anything not absolutely necessary.

Edith's generous heart had always taken delight in previous years in making dainty little Christmas presents for her many friends and for the poor and neglected ones of her father's parish who were not likely to be thus remembered by anyone else. It was the thought that all this must be given up this Christmas that made the keenest disappointment to her, and not the fact that her parents would not be able to give her any presents.

'I am not quite sure that it will be impossible for you to make any presents, Edith,' Mrs. Marvin said.

Edith looked up with a quick flash of hope from the blazing fire, which she had been eyeing in silence for several moments.

'Why, mamma, how can I possibly make any presents when there will not be a single penny to spend?'

'Come over here to this footstool, dear, and you and your old mamma will have a talk about it.'

Nervous prostration, caused by the strain of caring for her helpless mother day and night for a year, had made Mrs. Marvin an invalid, but such a sweet, patient one that the very sight of her face was better than a sermon.

Edith took the low seat, and rested her arm on her mother's knee while she waited impatiently for her to explain her words; for she knew from her expression that it was 'one of mamma's original ideas,' and not a mere matter of ordinary Christmas presents.

'Did Christ give any gifts to men, Edith?'

'Why, yes, mamma.'

'Do you read that he had any money or ever spent money in order to make a gift?'

'No, mamma.' She was beginning to catch her mother's thought.

'His gifts had nothing of the money element about them. We celebrate his birthday by making presents, but we do it clumsily, crudely, by making material presents. I have often wondered if our modern Christmas customs are not degrading the day, rather than honoring it, whether they do not tend to fix our minds on the material things of life, instead of leading them to contemplate and practice the great spiritual teachings of Christ. Do you suppose it would be possible to make Christmas presents which would not be material, which would give joy and pleasure and at the same time be Christlike presents—gifts to the spiritual life? Can't you try it this Christmas?'

'That is a grand idea, mamma!' exclaimed Edith, enthusiastically. 'I wonder why people haven't thought of it long before this. I intend to try the plan——'

Mr. Marvin's entrance interrupted the sentence. As he opened the door a great gust of wind and snow came in with him, and it required the exercise of all his strength to push the door shut and slip the bolt in its place.

Edith bade her parents good-night and retired to her little room at the head of the stairs. Long after the house was quiet she lay awake listening to the sound of the wind, a sound she loved as many a one born on the coast loves the sound of the waves, and thinking of Christmas presents without money—Christlike presents.

At first she was quite at a loss to think of a single thing that would serve her purpose. Her mind had always been so accustomed to associating material gifts with the thought of Christmas presents, that for a time all seemed very dark along the line of this new experiment.

'What gifts did Christ give to men,' she thought. 'He gave sight to the blind; but of course I can't do—why, I can, too, in a way! Old Mrs. Wales, poor blind woman as she is, delights to have someone read to her, but her only daughter must sew so steadily that she has little time for reading. I'll go Christmas morning and read to her all the Christmas passages from the Bible, and some Christmas stories which I'll hunt up. I'll lend her my eyesight for a time!'

That was the beginning, and after that her quick thought fairly leaped its way from plan to plan till she was in a perfect fever of delight and excitement. It seemed to her that she should never have the patience to wait two weeks for Christmas, which she already began to feel would be the happiest Christmas of her life.

'There! that'll be my Christmas present to mamma and papa—I mean just my being happy and contented on that day. If I bought a present for them, it would be with the hope and expectation of giving them pleasure. But what could give them so much pleasure as just simply feeling that I am not disappointed or "blue," but really happy on that holiday?'

The days that intervened before Christmas, instead of finding Edith sad and quiet, as her father feared she might be, found her bright and happy as any parent could wish. Now and then in the afternoon, after the housework was all done, she put on her wraps and slipped away for a little while, with the same air of happy mystery that is the usual accompaniment of young people's movements during the days preceding Christmas. In answer to questions from her father or mother she always replied, with a smile, 'Christmas presents.'

Mr. Marvin, who had been quite despondent over the adverse set of circumstances which made them so poor just at Christmas time, was so cheered by Edith's joyous planning for 'Christlike Christmas presents,' that his heart was stirred to write such a Christmas sermon as he had never before in his life written.

On the day before Christmas Edith was as busy and happy as any girl could possibly be on that particularly interesting day. First the whole house was swept and dusted from top to bottom. After that she set to work cracking pecans, walnuts and hickory nuts.

'Do you think we shall eat so many nuts, my dear?' Mrs. Marvin asked, with a smile, as she noticed several dishes already heaped full, and the process of cracking still continuing.

'Well, mamma, I suppose that it is time to confess that I am planning to have a little party to-morrow evening; but I did not

don't know the climax circumstances have been leading up to. It's artistic, in a way. First, the kitten. Then Biddy broke a little Wedgewood pitcher that used to be mamma's. Then I ruined my new travelling gown by spilling ink on it.'

'And I suppose you own only one dress. Another excellent reason.'

'Wait. Next, the dinner didn't come, but a country cousin did, and it being ironing day, we sat down to crackers and milk. Fifth, when the doctor came he imparted the cheerful intelligence that papa's rheumatism had settled into a case of genuine rheumatic fever, and that he must be nursed "professionally," as he called it.'

'Crickets! That is tough. But the housekeeper who is coming—'

'Who is not coming, you mean. After dinner a telegram came instead saying that she was ill herself, and must cancel her engagement with us. That leaves me at the head of the house, as before; and even if papa is well enough to leave in two months, it will be too late for me to join the classes. And last, Jack,'—Madeline paused to give her words due weight—'and last, Aunt Louisa is here!'

Jack gave a prolonged whistle. 'How on earth did she know your father was ill?' he asked.

'She didn't know it; I suppose she felt it. You remember, perhaps, what an uncanny way she had of finding out things. Anyway, she is here—in papa's room. I came out to take a long breath and decide what we shall have for supper. You know she never likes things other people eat—on principle, I think. Now what do you say?'

Jack pondered. 'I—I believe I'd shake the whole thing, and run away, Madeline,' he said at last.

'How about being a hero and a Douglas, and all that?' Madeline asked slyly.

Jack laughed. 'I was joking, of course,' he replied. 'That advice holds good. But it's pretty hard, Madeline—that's a fact!'

And both these young people fell to thinking. Visions rose before them of the prim, black-eyed, sharp-nosed little woman who ruled the Douglas family with her inflexible hand for several years after Mrs. Douglas died; how she would never allow Madeline to play with Jack in summer because it was too warm, or in winter because it was too cold; of the long stints the child had to sew or knit: of the ugly pinafores and unbecoming frocks she had to wear (for Madeline shared her childish woes with the sympathetic Jack in those days, too), and of the pretty, long curls that were cut off. They remembered how Aunt Louisa used to frown on dolls and pets, and the merry-making of Madeline's mates. They remembered, too, how Madeline had developed more naughtiness in that time than anyone—even Aunt Louisa—had dreamed her capable of. In short, the whole three years of rigorous discipline rose before the two, bringing in its train something of the old-time horror and homesickness: for Jack lived next door, and he came in for his share of severity. At last Mr. Douglas awoke to the true state of things, and with his tact and kindness managed—no one ever knew how — that Aunt Louisa should seek fresh fields for adventures. A housekeeper filled her place until Madeline herself was old enough to assume the head of the household, and affairs went on more smoothly. But during her occasional visits of inspection, even of late years, Aunt Louisa brought with her the same irritating atmosphere of discontent; and so it was that tired Madeline wiped the tears away as at last she looked up at Jack. 'Good-bye,' she said, rising, 'I must go now and send Pete to the telegraph office. And I suppose whatever I order for supper, Aunt Louisa will sniff at. No, you needn't come up to the house with me.'

Jack had risen also. 'I'll go down and send the telegram,' he said; 'you needn't bother about that. And—I'm awfully sorry, of course, and all that, because I had counted on having you in Boston during the rest of my stay in Cambridge. But, Madeline—' Jack paused and flushed in embarrassment, 'I—I wouldn't be beaten if I were you. Don't mind Aunt Louisa.'

'"Don't mind," Jack?' Madeline repeated.

'Yes, I know it's hard, but if you are diplomatic I think you can manage Aunt Louisa without her suspecting it. See, here, Madeline, why don't you try to win her over? Submit to her freaks for a while, and see how it works, I mean. You've got the grit—I mean the character—to submit, and you know it's ever so much nobler, and all that, than to be continually contending. Let her think she's disciplining you if she wants to. Mind her like a little lamb. If she has a particle of affection for you—and of course she has, somewhere—she'll respect you, see if she doesn't. You can do it if you try, Madeline, and it will be easier for you than continual friction. We all of us have to learn self-control some time, and you may as well begin now.'

Looking into Jack's jolly face, so strange now in its suddenly-assumed seriousness, Madeline realized that her playmate was leaving boyhood behind. Was she, too, rising above the petty vexations of girlhood, and learning restraint and self-control? She hesitated a moment; then she held out her hand impulsively.

'I suppose you mean well, Jack,' she said, 'but—well, I'll think of it.'

Jack abandoned his grown-up attitude with alacrity. 'Good for you!' he cried, shaking the little brown hand with boyish heartiness. 'You'll win, I know. Begin by giving my love to Aunt Louisa. Good-bye.'

When Madeline entered the house she met Aunt Louisa in the hall. 'Was that that Willoughby boy down in the garden with you?' she asked.

The garden was completely hidden from the house by tall trees, and Madeline was sure her aunt had not stepped outside the door. She opened her eyes in surprise, but only for a second. 'Yes, it was, Aunt Louisa,' she replied. Then she added demurely, 'He sent his love to you.'

'Huh ! He always was a saucy boy. What was he doing around here?'

'Nothing. That is, he was giving me good advice, and he is going to send a telegram to Cousin Kitty. I was to stay at her house while in Boston, you know. But I cannot start to-morrow, of course.'

'I should think not. So you were going to carry out that silly plan! Well, Katherine never had any sense managing her own children—much less other people's. A fine artist you'd make, with your careless, heedless ways. Your father will need you this winter.'

Madeline felt a choking in her throat, but she spoke evenly enough. 'Yes, Aunt Louisa,' she said, "I know he is very ill. When the doctor comes I will have him send for a trained nurse.'

'Trained fiddlesticks!' Aunt Louisa's eyes snapped. 'Much I'll have one of those white-aproned high-steppers around me ! What am I here for if not to take care of your father, I'd like to know?'

'But—'

'There's no "but" about it. I've settled that, and you needn't waste words.'

Madeline felt the full force of this remark. She closed her lips tightly a moment before she replied, with heightened color, 'Then I suppose I shall have to look around for another maid. Biddy cannot do all the work if papa is going to be ill long.'

Aunt Louisa looked sternly at her niece. 'Is shoeleather so expensive here that you cannot do a little trotting yourself?' she asked.

'I would if it were necessary,' Madeline replied, beating against the current from force of habit, 'but I had planned to do some painting, if I must stay at home.'

'I suppose you have heard of people having to change their plans?'

'Certainly, but I think—'

'It makes no difference what you think. What does your judgment amount to—a mere child like you? I call it providential that I came here to-day, instead of going to Mary's.'

An angry retort was on Madeline's lips, but she thought of Jack, and said nothing. Her aunt was watching her closely. Feeling her strong, compelling gaze, Madeline looked up presently, and said slowly, and with gentle dignity, 'Aunt Louisa, I am sure you mean to be kind to papa and me, but—and —.' She paused; then she added impulsively, 'Aunt Louisa, if you will take charge here for the time you stay, just as you used to, and will tell me what to do, I will obey you in every particular. You see,' she went on, even smiling now, 'we are both strong-willed, and only one can rule. That shall be you, and I will be subordinate, I will try to be good,' she finished, simply.

Aunt Louisa gazed long, after her peculiar manner, into the grey eyes that met her own unflinchingly. Then she turned abruptly away.

'Well, the first thing you may do is to go downstairs and scour out a dish clean enough for me to make some rice gruel in. I'll be down later.'

Again Madeline's first impulse was that of indignant protest. But she turned obediently and went downstairs. Aunt Louisa was still watching her. 'Humph!' she ejaculated as she crossed the hall to her brother's room.

* * * * * * *

So the autumn and part of the winter passed, and Aunt Louisa still governed the little household. Once Madeline had surrendered her highly-prized supremacy, matters settled themselves into a routine that was both hard and dreary; though when she ceased to match her own will against that of her aunt, the friction, as Jack had prophesied, diminished, and affairs ran more smoothly than she would have believed was possible. On the whole, Aunt Louisa was not unkind, if Madeline obeyed her commands unquestioningly. Yet it was not an easy thing for a high-spirited girl to be disappointed in regard to a long-cherished hope, and at the same time submit to be dictated to by a person whom she knew was at times both unjust and whimsical. There were moments when her rebellious nature insisted that the time for self-assertion had come. She often tried to persuade herself that such utter self-effacement was wrong. But she had given her word, and was both too proud and too honorable to retract ; so she obeyed commands, inwardly chafing often, but outwardly unperturbed, like a well-drilled soldier. Mr. Douglas' illness was much more severe than even the physician had prophesied, and for a few anxious weeks Madeline was happiest when working hardest, and quite willing to sink her own personality in that of her energetic aunt, if by doing so she could directly or indirectly benefit her father. And with all Aunt Louisa's stern ways, she was a tender nurse. As convalescence was assured, she allowed Madeline to spend more time in her father's room — not idling or

chattering, but quietly working; she had even imposed on the girl her old-time stint in the shape of table and bed linen, which she said was "shockingly low." At these times Mr. Douglas watched his daughter carefully, so that when early winter came he remonstrated gently with Aunt Louisa, telling her that Madeline was pale and thin and needed a change.

'Stuff and nonsense!' Aunt Louisa answered, 'Girls of this generation need more change in a year than their grandmothers did in a life-time. Madeline is healthy; it will not hurt her to get tired. I hope you think I know my duty, and do it, Robert.'

'I think you mean to,' the brother replied, and the subject was dropped.

But that evening, when Madeline came to say good-night, her aunt detained her. 'Are you very tired to-night, Madeline?' she asked.

Madeline looked up in surprise. 'Tired?' she repeated, 'why—no!' Then seeing real interest in Aunt Louisa's face, she dropped her reserve and spoke, and spoke more naturally than she had for months. 'I am strong and well, and I fancy I am not so much tired as disappointed. Still'—laughing—'I suppose this is good discipline, too, Aunt Louisa.'

'Yes, it's good discipline,' Aunt Louisa replied as she clicked her knitting-needles vigorously. And there was a gleam of triumph in her bright eyes, as Madeline went out and closed the door softly, that Mr. Douglas did not understand until his sister enlightened him.

A few weeks later Mr. Douglas, Madeline and Jack (who had come home for a few days), were sitting before the library fire in the twilight, when Pete brought in the afternoon mail. Madeline glanced at her letters listlessly. There were two or three from the girls at the Art School. She could not bear to read those while her father and Jack were watching her. Then she spied another beneath them, in a well-known hand. 'It's from Cousin Kitty,' she cried, joyfully. She broke the seal with a hasty excuse, and opened the letter. As she read her cheeks turned first pink then white. Again and again she turned the sheets, completely absorbed in the contents. When at last she looked up there was a bewildered expression upon her face, and her eyes were bright with unshed tears. 'May I read it aloud?' she asked, in a queer, subdued voice. 'You can make allowance for the compliments. To leave them out would spoil the strangeness of it. Just listen:

'"My dear little girl,—Do you think I have neglected you all these weeks. But you will understand, for you know how ill Rose has been. Now the doctor tells me that I must take her to a warm climate, and advises a trip to the Mediterranean, going to Egypt, and up the Nile, if she is strong enough when we get over there. Of course we must have a bright, jolly, travelling companion, and whom should we choose so quick as Madeline? Your father gives a willing consent, and ('here comes' the strange part,' Madeline interposed, not noticing a person standing erect in the doorway, whose rigid features and twinkling eyes seemed oddly at variance), 'Aunt Louisa, who has kept me so well informed concerning Cousin Robert, has told me also, what a dear, helpful child you have been and how capable you have grown.' ('Fancy!' exclaimed Madeline. The features of the person in the door-way relaxed). "She says that although you were bitterly disappointed because you could not come to us this winter, you have borne it bravely, and have shown yourself worthy of your name—Aunt Louisa's highest compliment, you know. And it was she who, when your father thought at first he could not spare you, offered to stay still longer with him that you might go. So now it is all settled, and we sail early next month. I forgot to say that after we travel a little, I shall take Rose to the South of France, and leave you with the Allens in Rome. From there they will take you to Florence and Milan before you join us later in Paris, and I fancy the opportunity to live with them so long in your beloved artistic atmosphere will compensate in a measure for what you have lost this year, so that you can begin work another fall not far behind, after all. I will run up next week and make final arrangements. Until then I am, as always, your loving,

MOTHER-KITTY."

'Now, what do you say to that?' Madeline exclaimed. Then, seeing her aunt, she rushed up to her in her old impetuous manner, flinging both arms around her neck. 'Oh, Aunt Louisa,' she cried, 'why didn't you tell me you were thinking such kind things, you dear, cross, lovely old aunt? Yes, you have been cross, and all prickly, and how could I imagine you were soft and shiny inside like—like those smooth brown chestnuts on the table there, any more than you could know what I was like until you had tried me? Now we shall know each other better, and love each other, I hope. How can I ever thank you?' And Madeline fairly hugged her aunt in her joy and excitement.

'There, there, Madeline, such demonstration is unladylike!' Aunt Louisa said, sternly, as she settled her cap. 'I came in to tell you to go out and take that abominable mixture you call a salad off the table and tell Biddy to cook some herring.' And Aunt Louisa walked off in her usual austere manner.

Madeline turned to her father and Jack, a comical expression of despair on her joyful face. 'If it were not for that letter, I should not believe it, even now,' she said. 'Give it to me quick, that I may rustle it and be sure of it when Aunt Louisa—bless her—scowls at me as before. But Jack, honestly, this would never have come to me if it had not been for you. You put me on my mettle, you know, talking about my name, and all that. Why, he preached me a regular sermon, papa!'

'A name does very well, Madeline,' said Jack, half laughingly, as he roused himself from the reverie into which he had fallen while Madeline read her letter, 'but in this case I fancy even that wouldn't have done much good if there had not been courage and perseverance at the back of it.'

And again Madeline looked surprised at Jack's increasing wisdom.

A Good Lesson.

'I never will put off anything again, so there!' came very emphatically from a small maiden of twelve, who was curled up with her kitten in the depths of an easy chair.

'Why not, Lottie?'

'Auntie! I didn't know you were here. I'll tell you, though, I am ashamed of myself. Papa told us the first of January that we were to move to "The Knolls" the first of March. Then mamma said Antoinette and I must pack the books and trinkets in our rooms, and our clothing, ourselves.'

'Did you each have a room of your own?'

'Yes, on our tenth birthday mamma gave us each a room, and said we were to keep them in order ourselves.'

'I wonder if the rooms were as much alike in appearance as the twin girls were in feature?'

'No, auntie,' with a blush. 'Nettie's was very nice always, but I couldn't find my things half the time. I didn't stop to put them in their places.'

'But go on with your story, Lottie?'

'Antoinette said right away she was going down to one of the shoe stores to buy a box to pack her books in, and off she went. She had one promised, and it came in a week. I thought I would do the same, but kept putting it off till almost the last, and then the boxes had all been destroyed, and I had nothing to put my books in but an old basket I found in the attic, and some of them were very much marred in moving; but Nettie's are just as nice as ever.'

'Her plan was best then, it seems.'

'Then she got her trunk down two weeks before moving-time; packed the things she was not using when she had time after school, and they were all out of the way when the hurry came.'

'Did you do so, too?'

'No, I thought I could pack everything in a day, and left all till the last; then there was such a hurry, and mamma needed our help; so my dresses, jackets, hats and shoes were all tumbled in together, anywhere and any way, and I haven't found them all yet.'

'How was it when you got here in your new home?'

'It has been just the same.'

'Antoinette's room is all in order, and she knows where to find everything, and mine is all topsy-turvy yet.'

'Where is Nettie this afternoon?'

'That's the worst of all, auntie. The Williams girls came for us to go to Cedar Lake with them, and they were to take their papa to the train on the way. Nettie was ready in ten minutes, for she knew where everything was; but I could not find my jacket anywhere, and they could wait no longer for fear Mr. Williams would miss the train; so I had to stay at home.'

'Where is your jacket?'

'I hunted a long time before I found it on the floor behind my trunk. I threw it on the top when I came in, and then I wanted something from the trunk, and away it went, and, of course, I forgot all about it by the time the girls came.'

'Where was Antoinette's cloak?'

'On the hook where she always hangs it. Why, auntie, she could get anything she needs from her closet in the dark. Everything is hung on its own hook.'

'That is an illustration of the old proverb: "A place for everything, and everything in its place."'

'Yes, and now I will not do this way any longer. If I have anything to do, I shall do it, as mamma has always told me! So, kitty, you may sleep here in the arm-chair, if you want to. I'm going to put my room in order, and keep it so, too!'

And Lottie went off to her task, leaving auntie thinking that, perhaps the disappointment about the ride was a very good thing for her dilatory little niece.—'Herald and Presbyter.'

Found Faithful.

Amongst all the letters that came home from the East during the Crimean war, one of the most affecting was that of a little drummer-boy to his mother. After describing the hardships of that memorable winter, the cold and pitiless wind, the hunger and nakedness which the army endured, he concluded with the simple, touching words, 'But, mother, it's our duty, and for our duty we'll die.—'Helping Words.'

Correspondence

CORRESPONDENCE PRIZES.

The prize offered for the best letter written in February has been awarded to 'Emily,' who lives in Grenfell, Assiniaboia. This prize, is a copy of 'Reprinted Stories from the Messenger.' If Emily will kindly send her full name and address, she will soon receive this book, which we hope she will enjoy very much.

'Alice's' letter for February was also very good, indeed. We hope to hear again from her.

The prize for March is awarded to Lena Macfarlane, Franktown, Ont. This prize for a missionary letter is a beautiful missionary book called, 'For His Sake.' Extracts from the letters of Elsie Marshall, missionary martyr of China.' We are sure Lena will enjoy this book very much. Perhaps after she has read it she will write an interesting letter about it to the 'Messenger,' so that we may all have the benefit of her prize!

'Samuel,' 'Annie,' and 'M.F.,' and others, also sent very well written missionary letters.

HONORABLE MENTION.

Here is another list of letters received. We hope to find room to print in full many of the letters thus acknowledged, but we try to give all the names, so that no one will feel left out. If any one misses his name from the list, please write again. We must again ask our friends to write very clearly on one side of the paper only, and to state plainly their name, age and address. Fred, Listowel; Ruth, Manitoba; Elsa; Mary, Hillsburg; Gertie, St. Vincent; Annie, Bart; Walter, Pittsburg, Indiana; Myrtle, Caradoc, Burwell Roads; M. L. B., Amherst; Clinton, Amherst; Maggie, Lower Selmah; Harold, Toronto; Hallet, New Tusket; Charlie, Malcolm; Gertrude and Daisy, Carnduff, Assa.; Mary, Tweedside; Ada, Keady; Florence, Hillsvale; Mildred, Nova Scotia; Hattie, Beach Meadows; Margaret, Iberville; Mary and Annie, Heathcote.

Detroit,

Dear Editor,—I will be six years old on the fourth of July. My grandma sends us the paper. She lives in Canada. We have two rabbits, and six pigeons. I go to school every day. We like the paper very much. My mamma helped me to spell some of these words. I will write again. Good-bye.

FREDDIE.

ABOUT A CAT.

Summit.

Dear Editor,—I am twelve years old. I have a cat. His name is Pat. I have six squirrels. The cat swallowed a ten cent piece. The way it happened is this: My brother and I were quarreling, about it, and the cat was on my brother's knee. He had the ten cents in his hand, and the cat got hold of it and swallowed it. I guess he thought he would settle the difficulty.

CHARLIE.

Broadview, Assa., N.W.T.

(To the Editor of the 'Northern Messenger.')

Dear Editor,—It will be my birthday on Friday, April 15. I shall be nine years old.

I go to school nearly every day, and am in the second reader. I am at the head of the class, and hope to keep there for some time.

On Sunday mornings I go to church. The service begins at eleven o'clock, and in the afternoon I go to Sunday-school, and there get my dear little 'Messenger,' and I am so much interested in reading the letters, that I thought I would write one too; and perhaps someone else may be interested in reading mine.

I have three little brothers, but no sisters; and mamma is very busy, for she has no one to help her but me. My oldest brother is ten, and he is helpless. I am next, the next is a boy of four, and he is a mischief sometimes. Then there is the baby, nine months old. So you may imagine what a lot there is to do for us all. Mamma tries hard to keep me at school, but sometimes I have to stay home and help her a little; for she says I am so useful to mind baby and bring wood in and other little things.

I must now close my letter as it is bed time. Perhaps some time I will write again. I remain your faithful friend.

CONSTANCE.

P.S.—There is a little girl at Grenfell, whose letter I read with interest, will she please write again. Her name is Emily.

NEAR A COAL MINE.

Springhill.

Dear Editor, — My mother has taken the 'Northern Messenger' for three or four years, and I like it very much, especially the page for young folks. I am in the eighth grade at school, and am studying bookkeeping. I go to Sunday-school and have only lost one day for a long time, and that was when I was sick. I live in a coal-mining town, of five thousand inhabitants, and I can often see the men riding down to the pit in the coal cars. There was an explosion a few years ago, in which a hundred and twenty men and boys were killed, and almost every week somebody gets hurt or killed, by a fall of coal or rock. In the summer I go to the country, and last summer I caught thirty-one dozen fish. I am fourteen years old, and like reading very much. I will sign myself,

JACK P.

Sarnia.

Dear Editor,—I live near the Sarnia tunnel. I have a little dog, and his name is Fritz. I and my brother play a great deal with him. We play hide and go seek with him, one holds a cloth over his eyes, while the other hides, then he comes and finds us. He likes to play with us all the time, and when anybody hits us he will jump up and put his paws against them and knock them down.

My mother got a Bagster Bible from you, for she subscribes for the 'Northern Messenger,' and my mother is well pleased with it. She thinks it is beautiful, and she wishes you success with your paper. Good-bye,

MARY.

JUBILEE DAY.

Belleville, Feb. 21, 1898.

Dear Editor,—I am a reader of the 'Messenger,' and am much interested in your column called 'Correspondence.' I thought I would write and tell you about June 22, 'Jubilee Day,' which I always hope to remember.

In the morning at nine o'clock the scholars met at their schools and were given a Union Jack, also a pretty souvenir medal on which was the Queen's head and the emblems of Canada.

We all then marched to the largest school, where speeches were made by Sir Mackenzie Bowell, Mayor Johnston, and other prominent men. Next we sang four pretty patriotic songs, and then the naming of the school took place, which was called 'Queen Victoria School.'

In the afternoon a procession formed of the different societies, and headed by the band, took place, and games, bicycle races, and such sports engaged the remainder of the afternoon.

In the evening a bicycle masquerade took place, which greatly pleased both young and old.

The city was beautifully decorated with flags, colored lanterns, bunting and suitable mottos.

A faint breeze rustled all day, and nothing more could be desired. A large crowd visited Belleville, and the day passed peacefully away without any accidents and so left a day long to be remembered by the children of the public schools.

MARGUERITE.

Carievale, Assa.

Dear Editor, — I enjoyed 'Daisy's' letter very much, and I think her society plan is a good one. Why can not we 'Messenger' readers club together to send the gospel to some of our less fortunate brothers and sisters in foreign lands?

LENA.

'CLIP.'

Amulree.

Dear Editor,—I got a little dog about two years ago, when it was but two months old. I was fairly delighted, and after some hesitation, I named it Clip. He is a very playful little fellow, and comes to meet me, when I come home from school. It is a little black water-spaniel. When it was big enough to go out to the stables it would run and get an egg, and bring it and lay it down at my feet. It learned, however, to eat the eggs, but I soon broke it off that habit. I remain yours truly,

Age nine years.

JOSEPH.

Gunter.

Dear Editor,—Grandpa gave me twenty-five cents to send for the 'Messenger,' and I am going to help him after school. I hope I can always send for your paper. Yours truly,

R.H.

Dear Editor,—I live on a farm about six miles from Buffalo, and twelve miles from Niagara Falls. There are woods back of our farm, and as soon as the frost is out of the ground the flowers come up. There is every kind of wild flowers, and I go back into the woods and pick a big bunch of flowers, and bring them up and put them in the house, and they last two or three days. I think spring is the nicest time in the year. Mamma used to take the 'Messenger' when she was little, and she likes it so she lets me take it.

GEORGIA.

A SUGAR CAMP.

St. George.

Dear Editor,—My little sister, Rhoda, has been taking your interesting 'Messenger' for three years. I often read stories out of it. I like them ever so much, especially the letters Mamma often told us we should write a letter to you also, since we took so much interest in the correspondence part of your paper.

I never read any letters from Beauce, or about a visit to a sugar camp in your paper, so I will tell you about one we had a few days ago. It was to my Uncle George's camp, about seven miles from home. We were eight in the sugar party. We started at nine o'clock in the morning, and had a very pleasant drive, the air was mild, the sun shone brightly. When we arrived at the camp we went around to see if the tin cans were full of sap. We then had our dinner, which was prepared before we left home. As the men had boiled the sap into syrup the day before, they then made tier on snow, it was very sweet. In the afternoon we went to a neighboring place to see the camp. When we came back to the camp, Uncle George gave us each some sugar and a little can of tier. Then we got home pretty tired, but glad after our day's fun. I will close, as it is my first letter, hoping it will be worth taking a small corner in your paper.

DALENE.

Keeping Shop.

'What shall I do,' mourned Frankie, disconsolately, walking backwards and forwards the whole length of the nursery; 'Mov'r is out, and the girls aren't coming for ever so long, and I've got a cold, so I can't run in the garden!'

Nurse heard the little moan, but she was very busy over some needlework; Linda heard the little moan, but she had promised herself a swing in the garden, and some dreaming over her future plans.

So, for fear nurse should set her to amuse her little brother, she slipped out at once, and certainly with a little prick of conscience, found herself alone under her favourite trees.

Annie, the nursery-maid, heard Frankie's little moan, and for a moment she bent her head closer over her fine needlework; she, too, wanted to get on with what she was about. But she had asked her blessed Saviour that morning to help her to please him, and suddenly she wondered if this could be what she had asked for?

'Come along, Master Frankie,' she said; 'I daresay we can find a game you haven't thought of lately.'

'I want some goodies,' said Frankie, 'but nurse says they're not good for colds. Mother gave me a shilling, but——'

'I know!' said Annie brightly, 'I'll run to the village and get you some sweets and things, and you shall get the shop ready while I'm gone. We'll keep a shop, you and I, Master Frankie, and the young ladies shall come to buy!'

Frankie looked interested. 'But I can't make it alone, and nurse is busy,' he objected.

'Yes, you can, when I've told you how,' said Annie; 'just get your little table and put out some sugar and things nurse will give you on bits of clean paper. Then, if you have any more time, cut up this card into money, and get it ready for the young ladies to buy with.'

THE LITTLE SHOPKEEPER WAS VERY DISCONCERTED.

Nurse rummaged in her cupboard, but a few lumps of sugar and a little heap of broken biscuits made the grand total till Annie should return.

Just as Frankie had cut out the card money, two pairs of feet were heard racing up the stairs.

Frankie's face fell: what a pity they had come before Annie! He ran to the door.

'This is a shop,' he said, 'a confectioner's, and you can come and buy; only you must be dressed up grandly of course.'

The little girls looked at each other. A confectioner's shop would be very nice, especially with Frankie, who always gave away things so, but how could they dress up in anyone else's house? They ran home to ask their mother for some of her things, but were back before Annie after all.

The little shopkeeper was very disconcerted at the small array of confectionery he had to offer; but just as he was devising what he could say, Annie came in with flushed cheeks, bearing a basket of apples, cakes and sweetmeats.

'You'll be able to eat the sponge fingers,' she whispered kindly.

'And you must come and help me in the shop,' he responded. 'Thank you, Annie!'

What a pity that Linda was dreaming in the garden!—'Our Darlings.'

A Little Girl's Wish.

(By Elizabeth R. George.)

'Mayn't I be a boy?' said our Mary,
The tears in her great eyes of blue,
'I'm only a wee little lassie,
There's nothing a woman can do.

"'Tis so, I heard Cousin John say so,
He's home from a great college, too;
He said so, just now, in the parlor,
"There's nothing a woman can do."'

'My we little lassie, my darling,'
Said I, putting back her soft hair,
'I want you, my dear little maiden,
To smooth away all mother's care.

'Is there nothing you can do, my darling?
What was it that "pa" said last night?
"My own little sunbeam has been here
I know, for the room is so bright."

'And there is a secret, my Mary,
Perhaps you may learn it some day—
The hand that is willing and loving
Will do the most work on the way.

'And the work that is sweetest and dearest,
The work that so many ne'er do,
The great work of making folks happy
Can be done by a lassie like you!'

—'Housekeeper.'

fir-trees that stand in front of her home.

'I should so like to give those squirrels a Christmas!' said Bessie, as she watched the nimble little fellows frisking about.

'Supposing you do?' answered mamma.

'Why, how?' asked Bessie.

'Get Will to give you some ears of corn. Then put on your cloak and hat, and hang them on that little tree over there.'

Bessie clapped her hands with delight.

'Won't that be splendid?' she exclaimed, joyously. 'It'll be a really and truly Christmas-tree for squirrels, won't it, mamma?'

So Bessie did as mamma suggested, and hung the bright yellow ears all over the little tree. Then she went into the house and watched again.

First came Papa and Mamma Grayie, and all their children. Then came grandpa and grandma, and all the cousins till the tree was covered with squirrels everywhere.

They stuffed their tiny mouths full of corn, and then ran swiftly away, only to return in a few minutes for more.

Bessie watched them till the sun went down, and the next morning not one single yellow kernel was to be seen. The white corn-cobs swung to and fro in the frosty air, and only one pretty gray squirrel sat pertly on the bough, staring at Bessie with his bright, beady eyes.

'I guess he wants to thank me,' said Bessie, and she opened the window and called politely, 'You're entirely welcome!'

But I'm very much afraid Mr. Squirrel never heard her, for he scampered away in a twinkling.

Barby.

(Persis Gardiner in 'Youth's Companion.')

'Oh dear!' sighed Barby, fidgeting about while she waited after school, 'it's 'most Christmas!'

Barby lived in a big stone house called the Orphan Asylum, with a hundred other little girls. They wore blue dresses and white aprons, and if you had seen them coming out of the school-room you would have said they were all just exactly alike. But they were not. They were all different from each other, and funny little Barby was different from all the rest.

Barby was waiting for Miss Brown, the teacher. She and Miss Brown were the best of friends.

'Well, what is the matter now?' asked Miss Brown, smiling down at the little cloudy face.

'It's 'most Christmas,' began Barby.

'And that is nice, isn't it?' said Miss Brown.

'No, ma'am!' said Barby, shaking her head like a pendulum. 'Not here. I want to keep Christmas like other folks.'

'So you shall,' said Miss Brown, kindly. 'The church ladies are going to give the children a dinner and a Christmas tree.'

'But that isn't keeping it like other folks,' persisted Barby. 'They give presents. I'm tired of getting and getting presents all the time, and not giving any. Oh, dear! And I wanted to give something to Annie that's lame, but I—aint—got—no—money!'

'You mean you haven't any—' Miss Brown began, but she stopped. She saw two round tears on Barby's red cheeks, and two more in her eyes; and how could a little girl be expected to speak properly with such a big lump in her throat?

So Miss Brown only stroked Barby's stiff, short hair, and told her that to-morrow after school she would show her how to make a present all herself without spending a cent.

'And bring with you any other little girls who wish to learn how to make presents,' said Miss Brown.

The next day a whole flock of blue dresses and white aprons gathered around the teacher. Each little girl had brought her own treasures to be made over into a present. One had a tattered doll, which was turned into a nice new one, and another cut a torn picture-book and pasted the pictures on stiff brown paper, making a pretty scrap-book. Barby had nothing but a great tangle of ribbons and bits of cloth, but Miss Brown said they would make a lovely rag-baby.

She showed Barby how to cut out the baby herself, and how to stuff it with cotton. It was almost as good as the dolls in the toy-shop, and a great deal softer and nicer to hug.

Barby provided dolly with a full set of baby-clothes and 'grown-up' dresses beside, for what good is a doll if it cannot be any age that you please?

Last of all, Barby took pen and ink and drew a face on dolly's white cloth head. Such black eyes and such curly black bangs were never seen before, and her mouth was so smiling that she made everyone else smile too.

'Mebby she isn't pretty,' said Barby, 'but, any way, she's cheerful. I'm going to name her after me and you—I'm going to call her Cheerful Miss Brown Barby.'

Some of the girls gave their presents to the babies in the nursery, and some to the little patients in the sick-room. Barby carried her dolly straight to lame Annie's little bed, and laid it in her wee, thin arms.

And to tell the truth, Annie liked it a great deal better than the beautiful great doll which the church ladies had just sent her. Cheerful Miss Brown Barby became a great favorite in the sick-room. When nurse was too busy to carry her from one little invalid to another, this patient dolly could be thrown from cot to cot all around the room without any risk of breaking her nose. All the sick children hugged her and jumped her to their hearts' content, and they laughed and forgot their troubles just at the sight of her queer, smiling face.

And Barby was very happy.

'Told you so, Miss Brown!' she cried, nodding her head triumphantly. 'It's nicer to give presents than to get 'em. Oh, a lot nicer!'

Wanted.

Wanted! young feet to follow
Where Jesus leads the way,
Into the fields where harvest
Is ripening day by day;
Now, while the breath of morning
Scents all the dewy air;
Now, in the fresh sweet dawning,
Oh, follow Jesus there!

Wanted! young hands to labor;
The fields are broad and wide,
The harvest waits the reaper
Around on every side;
None are too poor or lowly,
None are too weak or small,
For in His service holy
The Master needs them all.

Wanted! young ears to listen;
Wanted! young eyes to see;
Wanted! young hearts to answer
With throb of sympathy.
When on the wild waves' sighing
The strange, sad tale is borne
Of lands in darkness lying,
Forsaken and forlorn.

—Wail.

Christmas Cheer.

(Catharine Shaw in 'Our Darlings.')

How pitiless the rain was! As Lena stood in the porch of the school, she looked out upon it dolefully.

She had been very tiresome that morning, and had made a great fuss about taking an umbrella; indeed, she had pressed her way so hard, that at last her mother had told her with a sigh to do as she liked.

Now the rain had come in good earnest, and before she got home she would be wet through. It was of no use to wait, for already an imposition had made her late, and to herself. Seth was a Christian boy—one who let Christ live his loving, holy life in him; and that was why his holy life shone out, too.

So, wet through, tired and disheartened, Lena lifted the dripping door-latch and pushed into the kitchen.

She was greeted with a shout. There were Jessie and Seth pointing triumphantly to a hamper which was deposited on the middle of the floor.

'Mother has gone out, and we may open it,' she says, 'if we put everything ready for her to see when she comes in,' said Jessie.

Lena stood almost awe-struck. Then, in spite of all her grumbling and discontent, in spite of her fear that they should not be cared for, here was the very thing which she had been sure would not come.

'I'm so wet,' she said, hesitating. 'Can't I take off my things first?'

Christmas was coming very close, and as yet they had made no preparations.

The autumn had been a very wet one, and her father's work had been very short, so that money had been very short too, and Lena thought sadly that there would be but few preparations that they could make.

Usually, at this time, her father's brother sent them a hamper of Christmas good things; but this year it had not come.

Mother had said that morning, when they were speculating about it at breakfast, that 'not even a sparrow was forgotten before God,' but Lena would not be comforted by that.

She was going to think how hard things were, and nobody should persuade her better; this Christmas, at any rate, was going to be worse than any other, and there would be no fun at all! Mother would have no money to make things nice; father would sit by the fire and look mournful; Jessie would sigh that she had no materials to make a Christmas cake; and Seth—well, Seth always looked on the bright side, and only this morning had hung up his slate on the wall, asking everybody to write down something to be glad of! No, Seth would not do anything doleful, because——

Why was it Seth was different? Lena knew, though she would not acknowledge it

'Oh, yes,' said Jessie; 'only make haste. Mother said you were to change everything.'

Lena rushed upstairs. She looked at her boots; she thought of the hamper downstairs; and then she sat down on the floor and undid the soaking laces, after which she pulled off her dress and put on her afternoon one.

'Come along!' said Seth.

'Make haste, Lena!' called Jessie.

But still one moment longer Lena delayed. She knelt down for an instant beside her bed, and asked the loving, heavenly Father to forgive her distrust and waywardness, for Jesus Christ's sake; and then joyfully she rushed downstairs again, ready for anything. Seth had undone the cords, and now stood with the hamper-lid in his hand, only waiting for her appearance.

'Here's a cake,' said Jessie; 'then I shall not need to make one!'

'Here's some jam,' said Lena. 'What a big pot!'

'And look at these oranges,' said Seth.

'And these pots of jelly,' said Lena.

'And these apples. Oh, I do love apples!' exclaimed Jessie.

'Oh, here's the ham! Uncle generally sends a ham!' said Lena. 'I will hang it up on that nail.'

'What's this?' asked Jessie, feeling in the straw at the bottom. 'It's as hard and cold as——' There was a moment's pause as two black bottles came into view.

'I'm sorry uncle has sent these,' said Jessie, soberly; 'because father has not had any for ever so long. Mother will be sorry, too.'

Seth put them on the table. His heart sank a little. Father had been so much nicer, and home had been so much happier since the black bottles had ceased to come into it.

'I wish we could hide them,' said Lena, hesitatingly.

But Seth had a remedy for all the ills of life.

'That would not be right, because they are not ours,' he said; 'but if we pray about it, I'm sure it will come right.'

He gathered up the straw, and went outside with it, and when he came in again he did not say any more; but while his little sisters were picking up the apples and arranging them on the table in rows, he went to the slate in the corner, and began busily adding to his list of 'mercies.'

'Are you going to put down the stout?' whispered Jessie, looking over his shoulder.

He shook his head, smiling. He could smile now he had told God all about it.

Presently father and mother both came home. The rain had left off, and they stood in the doorway.

'Such a big hamper!' said Jessie.

'Awfully nice!' said Lena.

'Full of tuck!' laughed Seth, 'and a letter at the bottom, which is here.'

'So you have put some more things down on your slate?' smiled mother, sitting down by the fire. She, too, had seen the black bottles, and her heart had quaked. Then she, like Seth, had rolled her burden on the Lord.

'What's that?' said father. He, too, had seen the black bottles, but his heart had not quaked.

'My slateful of mercies,' said Seth, giving it him.

But father did not read the list.

'Seth!' he said.

The voice was unlike what father's had been lately.

'Yes, father?'

'Take out those black poisons, and break them on the grindstone. My brother meant it kindly, but—the Christmas cheer will be more cheerful in the long run without that—thank God!'

Seth's eyes met his sister's.

'Is not God good?' he said, as they followed him out to the grindstone. 'I can't think how it is we don't pray about everything!'

So they sat down to tea, and never was a happier meal. The children planned what they would do, and mother planned what she would give, and father read his brother's letter, and used his handkerchief lots of times.

'If you would be a total abstainer, I would,' he wrote. 'Drink hasn't done us much good, and never will. Just drop me a line and say so, and I'll drop you a line and say so. Shall we do it for Christ's sake brother?'

So that was how their Christmas cheer came.

The Rev. Archibald Fleming, of the Tron Kirk, Edinburgh, has excited much attention by his assertion that his parish is saturated with whiskey, and that he is aware of one man who keeps his wife continually drunk, because it is cheaper to do that than to keep her in food. The average experience is that drink is dearer than food, and to that extent, Mr. Fleming's utterance is unfortunate; but no one who knows the surroundings of the Tron Church, with the reeling High street—perhaps the most drunken thoroughfare in the British Isles—will question his statement regarding the whiskey saturation.—'The Presbyterian.'

LESSON VII. — MAY 15.

Watchfulness.

Matt. xxiv., 42-51. Memory verses, 44-46.

Golden Text.

'Watch, therefore; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.'—Matt. xxiv., 42.

Home Readings.

M. Matt. xxiii.,1-12. — 'One is your Master, even Christ.'
T. Matt. xxiii., 13-39.—'Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees.'
W. Matt. xxiv., 1-28. — 'Take heed that no man deceive you.'
T. Matt. xxiv., 29-41.—'My words shall not pass away.'
F. Matt. xxiv., 42-51.—Watchfulness.
S. Mark xiii., 24-37.—'Take ye heed, watch and pray.'
S. Rom. xiv., 1-13.—Every one shall give account of himself.

Lesson Story.

Our Saviour warns us to watch for his coming and to be ready the instant he calls. We can not know beforehand exactly when he is coming, but each day we may live in happy expectation, doing those things we shall be glad to be found doing when Jesus comes.

If a man expected thieves to come to his house he would have to be constantly on the watch, for fear the thief would come and find him asleep. So we must watch constantly and be ready for we cannot tell at what hour our Lord may come. A Christian is like a servant of a great king. The king leaves him in charge of the rest of the household, to give them their food and look after their welfare in every way. Blessed is the servant who shall be found faithfully, steadily, doing his duty when his lord suddenly returns! He shall be made ruler over all his master's goods.

But if the servant proves unfaithful and begins to think that his master is long in returning and perhaps will not come for a long time yet; he begins to smite his fellow-servants and to practise indulgence of all kinds. Then the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he least expects him and shall punish him most bitterly. He shall 'cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

Lesson Hymn.

Watch and pray! that when the Master cometh,
If at morning, noon, or night,
He may find a lamp in every window,
Trimmed and burning, clear and bright.

Watch and pray! the tempter may be near us;
Keep the heart with jealous care,
Lest the door, a moment left unguarded,
Evil thoughts may enter there.

Watch and pray! nor let us ever weary;
Jesus watched and prayed alone;
Prayed for us when only stars beheld him,
While on Olive's brow they shone.

Watch and pray! nor leave our post of duty,
Till we hear the Bridegroom's voice;
Then with him the marriage-feast partaking,
We shall evermore rejoice.

F. J. CROSBY.

Lesson Hints.

'Watch therefore' — 'I have set thee a watchman.' (Ezek. xxxiii., 7-9.)

'The thief.'—(I. Thess. v., 2.)

'Be ye also ready'—(I. Thess. v., 6, 8.)

Be ready in heart and life, be clothed in the garments of salvation as a bride awaiting the Bridgroom. If you are doing your every day work for him you will have nothing to lose when he comes, but if you are involved in worldly affairs you may be so entangled that you will not want to leave them; or you will suffer great loss in doing so.

'Who'—who chooses thus to be found faithful? Men choose differently, and when it comes to that day, 'one shall be taken, and the other left.' (Verse 40.)

'Give them meat' — spiritual food. The Sunday-school teacher is a servant set to feed the lambs. (John xxi., 15.) If he does his duty faithfully, great shall be his reward.

'Blessed'—he shall have the highest joy and reward. Faithfulness can never fail of a reward.

'Make him ruler'—the reward for faithful service is always a promotion to higher service and greater responsibility. 'He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.' (Luke xvi., 10.)

'Delayeth'—having been away so long the wicked servant says his lord may never come back at all, though he promised to come; or that at least he will not come for many, many years. But the faithful servant lives in glad readiness knowing his master may return at any hour.

'Smite his fellow-servants' — setting himself up above them, neglecting and persecuting them.

'Eat and drink' — indulging himself with the money left him to feed and care for the others.

'Cut him asunder' — this was an awful punishment actually practised by the Romans, the bodies of the living victims were cut or sawed into pieces. This typifies the punishment of the hypocrite who has tried to appear to be doing God's work while in reality he has been helping the enemy.

Primary Lesson.

Last week we learned about the King's marriage feast and the Golden Text was, 'Come; for all things are now ready.'

This week we learn that we are to be ready and waiting for our Saviour to come and take us to that feast.

Suppose you lived just next door to school and you could get there in time if you started the minute the bell began to ring. If you were not ready when the bell rang, even if you had only your shoes to put on or your jacket to button, you would be late. Being very nearly ready would not do, you must be altogether ready. Suppose your father, when he went away in the morning left you a little task to do, would you think it better to do the work first and then have time to play? or to amuse yourself first and perhaps forget all about the work? Which would your father like best?

Suppose someone gave you some pretty little chickens, and you began to build them a coop. And while you were building the coop very elegantly you forgot to feed them and they all died. What would the person who gave you the chickens think?

Our first lesson is to be ready when Jesus comes. Not to be just nearly ready but quite ready. Suppose he were to come to-night would you be ready? Have you your 'wedding garment' on? Are you trusting Jesus to save you?

The next lesson is that we must be faithfully doing our duty when our Lord comes. If he were to come to-morrow would he find you doing your duty? Are you trying every day to grow more like Jesus, loving and sweet and helpful to all around, not trying to do things for show but because they please Jesus?

Suggested Hymns.

'Jesus bids us shine,' 'Are you ready?' 'Christian, seek not yet repose,' 'Lo! He comes,' 'Sound the battle-cry,' 'Loyalty to Christ,' 'Our blest Redeemer.'

Practical Points.

May 15. — Matt. xxiv., 42-51.

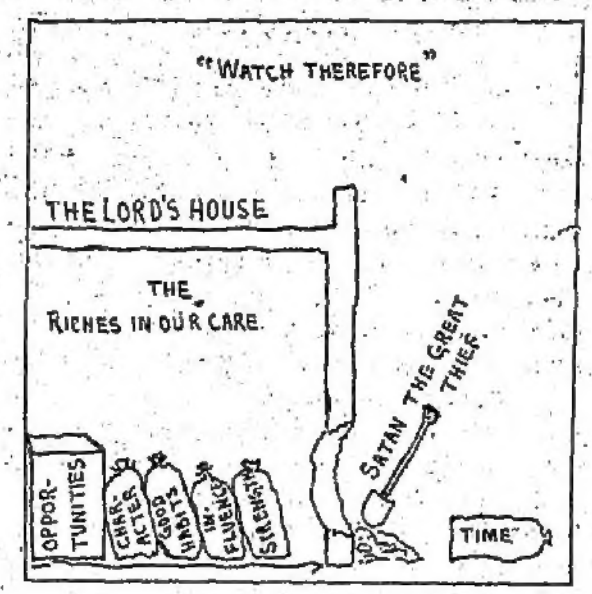
A. H. CAMERON.

It is the policy of the world to be alert when danger threatens. It should be the practice of the Church to be vigilant at all times. Verses 42, 43, 44. The faithful and wise will secure promotion. Verses 45, 47. Prov. xxii., 29. 'The blessing of the Lord maketh rich.' Verse 46. They who revel in God's absence shall tremble at his presence. Verses 48, 50. The hypocrite and profligate shall at last find their own level. Verse 51.

The Lesson Illustrated.

We get our illustration to-day from the second verse of the lesson. Here is a section of the goodman's house showing his treasure-room with the good things in it, and one bag of the very precious treasure already stolen. The words 'broken up,' are literally, 'to be dug through,' for the walls there are often built of mud baked hard in the sun. The thief here has then chosen a time when the goodman was not watching and has dug through.

You may call the thief 'Procrastination' or 'Carelessness' or 'Selfishness,' and many other



names and the illustration will be just as good. You may, too, call him 'Liquor,' for the drink habit steals away just these very treasures and many others. But after all these are only different servants of the one great thief, Satan.

Watch and pray, and stand sentinel over your life, armed with the whole armor of God, and we shall keep our trust till the King comes.

Christian Endeavor Topic.

May 15.—Our bodies God's temples.—I. Cor. iii., 16-23.

A Wrong Practice.

It would be interesting to know how large a number of teachers in Sundays-schools put off preparation for instructing their classes until just before the hour of such service. It is also to be feared that not a few make no special preparation at all beforehand. It can hardly be said that such ones are, in any deep and vital sense, competent and accurate teachers. It is quite possibly true that those teachers who, through the week, are devoting themselves to general Bible study, are passably qualified for class instruction without special preparation. Certainly they are much better qualified than are those who do not make a daily practice of studying the Bible, and who do not make special preparation for meeting their classes.

Now, all will say that it is a wrong practice in any one habitually to go before the class without special, studious, preparation. Moreover, it is wrong for any teacher to practice depending upon the Holy Spirit to help in his work if he neglects any reasonable efforts to fit himself properly for his duties. It is quite probable that some teachers have the idea that even if they do not make studious and timely preparation for their class-work, the Holy Spirit will come to their aid and save them from making a failure. But we must think that such an idea is utterly repugnant to the Holy Spirit, and he will not work a miracle to rescue any Christian Sunday-school teacher from a failure in his class simply because he has been inexcusably negligent in making preparation for his duties.

It is a contemptible presumption to ask the Holy Spirit to make up for our slackness and unnecessary inefficiency. We are to do our very best to fit ourselves for our tasks, and at the same time ask the Spirit to help our infirmities and bless the work of our hands.—'Baptist Teacher.'

Good Names for Time.

The Burmese call twilight 'Brothers-would-not-know-each-other time.' Sunset is 'Sky-shutting-in time.' Seven o'clock in the evening is 'Children-feel-sleepy time,' and ten o'clock at night is 'Grown-up-people-lay-down-their-heads time.'

What a grand language that in one or two words can express each of these ideas! — 'Jewish Missionary Herald.'

WAR

A Call to Arms.

War has been declared—as serious a war to us, in many respects, as the war which dates from yesterday. As in that case, we need not wait for the completion of formalities for the calling out of the forces. We could wish the time of the taking of the plebiscite vote had been announced with the measure. The most suitable and probable time is immediately after harvest, say somewhere about the beginning of September. We cannot afford just now, at all events, to presume a later date. It is time for all forces to be brought into motion. It will not do for local temperance men to imagine that there is somebody managing somewhere who will tell them what to do or do it for them. There is certainly a recognized central organization all ready for action. But it is not like that of a nation, going to war, that votes a hundred million dollars and keeps trained hosts with nothing to do but attend to the business. The men who manage the Dominion Alliance and plebiscite committees have not four months' vacation to go campaigning in. Still less have they any money. The first thing we have to say is let every man fight before his own door. Each pastor has his pulpit and his lecture hall desk from which not only to exhort but to organize his own contingent for the war. This is a work which no pastor need shun because it is political. His duty to his own flock is plain, and one which he cannot escape. The pastors, however, are not the only leaders. The officers of temperance organizations everywhere must get together and see that the smaller companies are organized for local co-operation. In the absence of recognized official leaders, whoever will act in the way of calling the people together, may. Then as to money. A great deal of money is necessary for general purposes. Those who can for the moment do nothing else, can send something to help the general cause, however little. The 'Witness' will gladly receive money for the furtherance of this war. The temperance forces are organized by provinces. Whatever is thus received will be acknowledged in the 'Witness,' and forwarded to the headquarters of the province from which it comes.

The plebiscite bill, as laid before Parliament is exceedingly satisfactory, with the exception that it does not determine the date. That will probably be in the first or second week in September, when the harvest will be over in the country and when summer vacationists will be, for the most part, returned to the towns. The bugbear of a tag has been omitted. From a political point of view this is extremely wise.

The temperance people have just the ballot paper they want, and will be able to go into the campaign with their whole heart. If they do not gain the day it will be because the people do not want prohibition. They will then know where they are, and will have to buckle on their armour for further education. If they are wise, however, they will realize that the following ten years, all put together, will not afford them as much opportunity for educating the people as the next four months. A campaign of education is what that before us should be called. Let all objections be raised that any may have to raise. Let them be debated and threshed out. Let those who all their lives have accepted the prohibition principle as a matter of course see to their weapons and prepare to down cavilers. The great argument is that our country is cursed by liquor; its brightest youth are decimated by liquor; its enterprise is paralyzed by liquor; its public affairs are corrupted by liquor; liquor is its enemy, and its enemy is in possession; it is time it was driven out; every patriot will take a hand in the insurrection. Canada, it is true, is, among northern nations, the most temperate. That is no reason why it should submit to the enormous harm and loss from which it annually suffers in soul, body and estate. That is rather the reason why it should lead the nations in breaking the shackles of this bondage and teach them that it is possible to be free.

Its effect if the country is not ready for prohibition will be to startle reformers into anxious effort to make it ready. Supposing prohibition to become law, it is of the first importance that the country should be ready, not only to give it a passive preference such as a plebiscite victory would imply, but actively to insist upon its enforcement. No proposed plebiscite campaign to rouse and ripen the country for its duty. In fact, even supposing the people to be by vast majority prohibitionists, we can imagine no other way of mobilizing them anything like so effective as this. Sir Wilfrid Laurier and his government are not all prohibitionists, but, as a whole, they have loyally stood by their engagement to their temperance members to bring in this measure, and Mr. Fisher has had the pleasure of bringing it in intact, uncomplicated, and unobstructed.—'Daily Witness,' April 22.

'Messengers' for the Sailors.

'I wish I could afford to take fifty copies of the 'Northern Messenger,' to circulate among the men of our fishing fleet, and for them to distribute wherever they go. Our 'Daily Witness' is clipped closely to make scrap-books for the sailors, and I may say that our 'Union' gets many a valuable suggestion from your valuable paper. For the campaign we need to use every earnest effort and printers' ink must be our best weapon in this warfare.

'Our local W. C. T. U. is trying to establish a temperance resort for sailors in this town, and when it becomes a fact we shall be thankful for any literature which you may be willing to donate towards our parlor.'

This extract is taken from a letter from Lunenburg, Nova Scotia. We have thought that some of our readers might be glad to help to send the 'Messenger' to these fishermen, thus doing a little definite missionary work. We should be very pleased to receive and acknowledge any sums sent in for this purpose.

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